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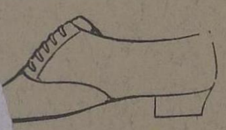

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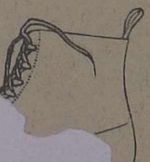

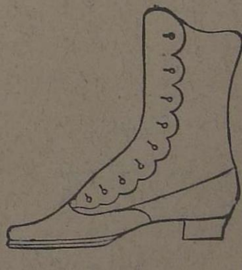

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The Journal of Indian Art.

INDUSTRIAL ART IN BIKANIR.

By SURGEON-MAJOR T. H. HENDLEY,

Member of the Royal and Bengal Asiatic Societies; Residency Surgeon, Jeypore; and Honorary Secretary, Jeypore Museum.

BIKANIR is so remote from the places which are generally looked upon as the centres of Indian civilization, that few readers of this journal would expect to see its industrial arts noticed at all, or would, perhaps, believe in their existence. It is, however, a fact that the very inaccessibility of this distant part of Rajputana has been the cause of the preservation, if not of the origin, of several ingenious arts; but in order to make this clear, it is necessary to give a brief account of the country and of its history.

In 1874 a special official Gazetteer of the Bikanir State was written by Colonel (then Captain) Powlett of the Political Department, and to this, and to the article "Bikanir" in the *Rajputana Gazetteer*, published in 1879, the student must be referred for full information. All that is necessary for the present purpose is to give such brief notes from those works as may bear on the subject in hand. Bikanir is situated between 27° 30′ and 29° 55′ north latitude and 72° 30′ and 75° 40′ east longitude. Its area is about 23,500 square miles, and its population according to the Census of 1881 was 509,021. It is bounded on the north by the Mussalman State of Bhawalpur and the British district of Sirsa; on the East by Hissar (also British) and Jeypore; on the south by Jodhpore; and on the west by Jaisalmer, a state ruled by a Bhati Prince of the Lunar race of Rajputs.

The following description of the country is quoted *verbatim* from the *Rajputana Gazetteer*:—"The general aspect of Bikanir is dreary and desolate in the extreme, and Elphinstone has said that within ten yards of the capital the country is as waste as the wildest parts of Arabia. Speaking roughly, the west, and part of the north of the country which are comprised in the Indian Desert, are the least inhabited parts, and here the villages lie far apart. To the north-east and east, as far as Sujangarh on the south-east border, the villages lie nearer together and there is more cultivation. Nearly the whole surface of the country is covered with undulating sand-hills from 20 to over 100 feet high, which in some places bear a scanty growth of harsh juiceless grass, of mimosas, caper shrubs, and phog, a shrub with a light and tender stem and branches serving as fodder for camels. The consistence of these sand-hills is frequently so loose that men and animals stepping off the beaten tracks sink as if in snow. Except near the triple border of Bikanir, Jaipur, and Marwar there are no rocky hills in the State, and the few there are do not attain a higher elevation than 600 feet. Forest does not exist. South of the capital there is a considerable tract covered with brushwood, in which the horses and cattle of the chief are allowed to range, and near some of the towns there are small plantations of *bair* (zizyphus jujuba). The commonest tree in the country is the *khejra* (Acacia leucophloea), the pods, bark, and leaves of which are eaten by cattle, and in times of famine, by the poor. During and just after the rains the country, however, wears a very different appearance, becoming a vast green pasture land covered with the richest and most succulent grasses. The soil of Bikanir is everywhere sandy. In some parts—as at Bikanir itself, towards Delhi, and to the south-west towards the Jesalmer border the sandstone substratum crops up."

A less fascinating picture could hardly be drawn, yet it is almost too flattering. The writer of this article crossed a portion of the Bikanir desert *en route* from the Sambhur lake to the capital a short time ago. His carriage was drawn by three pairs of camels, which were changed at every sixth mile, and yet the animals were rarely able to move faster than at foot pace. Travellers unaccustomed to the desert can hardly walk in the heavy sand, and even on the better kind of soil their course is impeded by the sharp spiked husks of the *Bharbhut* grass (euchrus Catharticus), which get into clothing and almost everything, and even disable dogs and other small animals. The water is almost everywhere brackish, in some places almost poisonous, while the quantity obtainable is small, because the wells are usually very deep, in the capital as much as 300 feet, and in some places even more.

These drawbacks would present almost insuperable obstacles to the conquest of the country, and they are certainly sufficient to prevent anyone from living in the State who can find a better home. These unpleasant difficulties were, however, the causes which in unsettled times induced the wealthy Hindoo bankers and merchants to seek an asylum in the country.

In the days of the Moghul supremacy over the fertile plains of Hindustan, of Central India, and of Guzerat, if a Hindu were known to be wealthy he soon became an object of suspicion and dislike, so that ultimately some pretext was sure to be found to deprive him of what were considered, and too often perhaps rightly, his unlawful gains. The Hindu Baniah, and more particularly the Marwari Jain, like the Jew, has a natural talent for making money, and, provided he can attain his object, is willing to run considerable, and even personal, risks. He cannot, however, bear to lose what has been gained at so much pains and danger. When, therefore, his wealth in former times became the envy of his masters, he withdrew to a comparatively safe spot. Such places of refuge were open to him in Bikanir, Jaisalmer, in Shekhawati (the northern portion of Jeypore), and in the remote parts of Marwar. It is true that the Rajput lords of the soil charged a high price for their protection, and kept him in his proper place, but he was amongst men of his own faith, and was allowed to worship as he liked, and in many ways to display his wealth for the envy and admiration of his neighbours. His female relations were, moreover, tolerably safe and enjoyed a good deal of freedom. It thus came to pass that when the Bikanir and other chiefs were strong, their capitals were filled with men of the rich mercantile classes, who built large houses and spent their money in the land. The chiefs were fully aware of the modern axiom that "Capital is shy," and were therefore unusually careful not to carry their exactions too far. The temple authorities were, moreover, all in favour of the banker who, sooner or later, himself, or through his female relations, was sure to spend much of his money on religious purposes. Perhaps, too, some of his relatives served the native court, and at times, not unfrequent, judicious loans to impecunious princes also increased his personal interest.

The wealthy Bikanir merchant or banker was a travelled man, familiar with the arts in vogue in distant lands; it was, therefore, natural that in his retirement he should endeavour to adorn his home, and that he should surround himself with some of the beautiful objects which had become necessary to his comfort. Even if we cannot credit him with so much refinement, it is certain that the mere love of display would induce him to procure novelties to impress his countrymen with the sense of his importance and knowledge of the world. I am inclined to think the latter the true motive, and the following anecdote seems to strengthen this opinion. When gas-lighting was first introduced into Jeypore, the manager of the gas-works was offered several thousand rupees to illuminate a banker's house in Shekhawati for one night only, the sole object being that on this night, the wedding night of the son of the house, the guests might see something they had only heard of, and talk, then—and, perhaps, for many months or years to come—of the munificence of their host. For similar reasons the electric light on the roof of the Palace of the Raja of Seekur, a great desert lord, is the wonder of all the inhabitants of his extensive domain, and was the talk of the whole country side beyond Bikanir, nay even to the remote borders of Sind, until quite recently, when the Bikanir Palace was similarly illuminated.

In Bikanir, and in all the great towns of the West, the most prominent art is that of the carver in wood or stone. The materials are used indifferently by the same artist in many parts, the cheapest in the locality being the most used. In Bikanir, however, the two trades are separate. At Bikanir itself a fine, easily worked sandstone is procurable. It varies in hue from red to cream colour; the former being the most valuable, and when procurable, chosen in preference to the latter. The quarry is actually at Khari, 30 miles north-east from the town. The capital is a city of sandstone. The house-fronts are beautifully carved and enriched with overhanging balconies of red stone, and with elaborately cut door frames, and charming windows which have pierced panels of arabesque tracery. Here and there, too, one may see a grotesque figure supporting a block of stone, or a figure in relief worked on the huge brackets which form the false arches over the gateways. The carving is well done, but is rarely well seen, as the streets are so very narrow that it is almost impossible to see more than a few feet of a façade at once. Still further west, in the remote capital of Jaisalmer, there are equally handsome mansions cut in four varieties of the beautiful nummulitic and other fossiliferous limestones on which the city stands.

The traveller comes upon these great towns, situated so far from the centres of Indian civilization, with surprise. After days of fatiguing toil through heavy sand, it is truly astonishing to find a huge walled town of say 60,000 inhabitants, such as Bikanir, spring up before his eyes; nor is his wonder lessened when he hears that only twelve inches of rain fall on an average in this region, and that the drinking water is obtained from wells from 250 to 300 feet in depth. These wells are remarkable examples of constructive skill. Some of them cost a lakh of rupees to excavate. Every basketful of soil in the smaller wells has been removed after the excavator has filled it below and has returned to the surface. The writer once saw a dying man who had incautiously remained below while the basket of earth was being drawn up. A single stone fell and crushed in his skull. When the water is reached the supply seems inexhaustible, and it is pure. So great is the rush of water that the Bikaniries believe that they have beneath them a huge underground lake or stream, and, in confirmation of their theory, they tell stories of various articles which have fallen into one well having been found after a time in another at a distance from it. As in the city these wells are covered, their contents are carefully preserved from contamination. In

the villages they are only surrounded by lattice-work to prevent accidents. A Bikanir well is a work of real engineering skill, and in some cases the buildings or towers at the top of it, which not only serve to protect it, but afford supports for the wheel over which the well ropes are drawn, are of artistic and handsome construction. Major Talbot notes that towards the Eastern border they are of Muhammadan minaret shape, due perhaps to the influence of the old Mussalman rulers of Shekhawati.

The following rates will give some idea of the cost of stone carving in Bikanir. Doorways of sandstone can be made from ₨ 200 to ₨ 1000 each. Trellis-work can be cut in sandstone for ₨ 10 per square foot, in marble (chiefly because the stone is imported) for ₨20. Balconies, each 3ft. by 5ft., cost about ₨ 60. A pillar enriched with flowers, 10ft. long and 3ft. in circumference, can be made for ₨ 30. Figures of Hindu deities of the usual conventional and inartistic character, as well as small toys, which serve as paper-weights, are also made by the same workmen.

Although stone is everywhere most used, very handsome doors and windows are also constructed in wood. They differ little in style from the work in stone, though occasionally the lintels of the doors have a very archaic, even Assyrian, appearance about them. As I have pointed out, in a previous paper in the *Journal* on Decorative Art in Rajputana, many of these doors are strengthened with huge bars and rose-headed nails of iron or brass, and with plates of tin. ₨ 8 to ₨ 110 are paid for a door frame, and from ₨ 5 to ₨ 40 for a pair of doors. Small ornamental brackets, cabinets, and suchlike articles have been occasionally made for Europeans.

The art product *par excellence* of Bikanir is a species of lacquer-work which may be applied to wood, stone, or even glass and metal. It was, I imagine, first employed to the decoration of a large hall in the palace of the Maharaja, a huge pile of buildings in the fort which stands without the town.* Full particulars of the mode of lacquering surfaces at Bikanir are given in No. XII. of the *Journal of Indian Art*, page 87, from the pen of Major A. C. Talbot, C.I.E., now and then Political Agent at Bikanir. Briefly these are :—"On the surface of the wood, which had been previously well scrubbed with liquid clay and allowed to dry, the outlines of a flower pattern was stencilled with a bag of powdered charcoal through perforated paper. Successive layers of liquid clay were then applied with small squirrel's hair brushes within the outlines of the pattern, each layer being allowed to dry before the next application, until a raised surface, bringing out the stalks, leaves and petals with sufficient distinctness had been produced. The whole surface was then fixed by a coat of paint, and when this was dry gold leaf was applied over all. The groundwork, black with a red border, on the portion intended to face the central avenue and the adjacent courts of Central India and Ajmere, and red with a black border, in the interior of the Bikanir bays, was then painted in, the flower pattern standing out in gilt relief." The above is a description of the painting of the Bikanir Screen at the Indo-Colonial Exhibition, but *ceteris paribus* it is equally accurate of all other articles. The whole of the great hall called the Rai Newas is covered with ornament of this character. The roof is decorated with figures representing Indra, King of the Celestials, with the Gandharvas (or Heavenly Musicians) trumpeting his fame from the midst of conventional clouds.

Until quite recently the artists worked on the most useless articles, such as old sauce or beer bottles, metal cans, sheets of tin forming the backs of bazar mirrors, bedstead legs, and so on. The writer, following the example of Mrs. Talbot, who has done much to revive this art, has for several years past sent a considerable number of white earthen vessels of different well-known Indian forms, which have been decorated in the most beautiful manner in Bikanir. The specimens have all been sold at the Jeypore Museum soon after their arrival, and the artists have thus been provided with a mart for their wares. A great difficulty which workmen in remote places have to contend with, has thus, in this case, been easily met. Two of the artists, I suspect very inferior ones from the style of their work, have been lately induced to come to Jeypore. I look upon this as a false step.

The following are amongst the best articles which have been produced :—Wooden cabinets ; wooden plaques to serve as book-covers ; vases of all kinds in stone ware, clay, porcelain, glass, or even leather. For native use *charpoy* or bedstead legs, chairs, boxes, portions of *ekkas* (pony carriages) or *bailies* (bullock carts), &c. The style of ornamentation is either floral or geometrical, and very frequently the ground is broken up into medallions. The colours are very bright and pure. In the most typical work the design is in relief, in other cases the articles are merely painted. Some very handsome tables have been covered with a profusion of natural flowers, which are drawn and coloured with much spirit and skill. (Plates 6 and 20). Major Talbot thinks that the designs on one

* Most of the many rooms in this extraordinary palace are decorated in different styles. One is covered with a plaster of fine white chunam cut out in a variety of floral patterns to display the underlying glass with which the walls are decorated. There is another apartment which is entirely covered with portions of a willow pattern dinner service, and careful examination shows that in nearly every case the flat perforated fish strainers have alone been used. Unless these were specially ordered, which is highly improbable, the expense incurred must have been enormous. At Odeypore and Dungarpore walls of similar rooms are covered with soup plates set in the midst of Dutch tiles.

of these tables were copied from coloured plates of the Taj mosaic work. Occasionally plates and vessels of coarse Makrana marble are painted and gilded with similar ornament. In all cases the beauty of the work is greatly enhanced by the free use of gilding, and this is no doubt the principal reason why the ware is costly, though, in the case of good specimens, the expenses and risk of carriage of a double journey over a hundred and fifty miles of desert each way, add of course greatly to the cost.

There is something singularly pure and bright about the colouring of these articles. It is very marked on the coloured ivory bracelets which are made in Bikanir for the use of the desert women. In Bikanir and in Marwar, the arms of the women are sometimes almost completely covered with such rings (Plate 5); as a rule, however, they are quite plain. In other places in the west the ivory is grooved to receive thin plates of silver or gold. The writer discovered fragments of such ornaments twenty feet below the surface of Old Sambhur. These must have been at least 1200 years old.

The following will serve as a guide to prices in Jeypore:—(Plates 6 to 10 and 18, 19). Large vases, globular, about 7½ inches high, Rs. 7; Egyptian lantern-shaped vases, ornament not raised, about 6½ inches high, Rs. 3; small vases, about 4½ inches high, with geometrical ornament, Rs. 1/8; wooden cabinet with drawers, about 18 inches long and 13 inches high, Rs. 24/8; book covers, about 14½ by 8 inches, Rs. 4.

In Bikanir, as well as in some of the large towns in neighbouring States, a little work in base metal is done. The most artistic examples are water bottles of pewter with brass necks and stoppers. Domestic articles in mixed metals are also made. A few matchlocks and percussion guns at the rate of from Rs. 3 to Rs. 10 per gun are manufactured.

Wherever there is a court, or wealthy men abound in India, jewellers and silversmiths are found. Bikanir is no exception to the rule. Sometimes the royal workmen are called upon to make plate on a colossal scale. Illustrations of two silver thrones are given with this number of the journal. (Plates 11 and 12). The throne or *Sinhasana* is often used, though a Rajput chief's proper seat of honour is the *gaddi* or cushion. It is common in the East to support thrones on the images of tigers or lions, or on their paws, hence the word *Sinhasana*, or Lion Seat, which is also applied in Urdu to an ordinary dressing table. Assyria gives us, perhaps, the earliest record of such thrones. One of the Bikanir silversmiths has lately produced some very excellent specimens of chased and engraved work, as for example, water tumblers with figures of nautch girls and Rajput chiefs, each standing in a medallion on a frosted ground. The finish is excellent. (Plate 5). Rings, necklaces, armlets, and head ornaments for the turban are fairly well made at prices varying from Rs. 200 to Rs. 10,000; also bangles in gold from Rs. 200 to Rs. 1000; and in silver from Rs. 25 to Rs. 100.

Enamelling in gold is done in small quantities at the rate of two rupees per 180 grains, or the *tola* of gold. Illustrations are given of some examples of sumptuary art jewellery. (Plates 13 to 17). These include bridal ornaments, epaulets, and necklaces. The workmanship is somewhat inferior, and the objects themselves are remarkable chiefly for their intrinsic value. The engraved figures of deities on the epaulets are curious (Plate 14), and so is the somewhat Assyrian form of ornament of the larger specimens. I have noticed this tendency to revert to archaic types in much of the jewellery of the West; for example, there is the huge *haikal*, or garland of gold plates, sometimes made for bankers' wives in Marwar and Bikanir; the *hausli*, a massive gold collar; a peculiar torque-like neck ornament which I have seen made in gold and enamel for a rich Jeypore lady; and so on. (Plates 15 to 17).

The Hindu adopts designs from all nations and styles and makes it his own. He seems to be able to absorb everything, but to invent little or nothing. This may account for the extraordinary coincidences which crop up in all directions, and which seem to show that in India there is nothing new under the sun. There is a good illustration of this in the common twisted gold chains which are made in Indian bazars. Such chains will be also found attached to the Tara Brooch in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. Was Byzantium the common source of inspiration?

Glazed pottery of an inferior kind is made in the State. The Khus-Khus fans of Reni, a large Bikanir town, have also some repute. These well-known articles are made from the roots of the *Anatherum muricatum* grass, which is common in the desert. It is a sacred, sweet-scented grass, and the fans or *punkhas*, which are made of it, are moistened with water so as to produce, when in motion, a cool, refreshing, and pleasant breeze. The ordinary *tatties* or grass frames for cooling rooms are filled with roots of the same grass.

As Bikanir is famous for its camels, it is not wonderful that it is equally renowned for the trappings and saddles of those useful animals. The best test of the value of a Bikanir camel and its saddle is that the rider should be able, when at full speed, to hold in one of his hands a full goblet without spilling a drop of the contents.

Several of the textiles of Bikanir are somewhat interesting and of commercial value, as, for example, (*a*) *lois* or blankets; (*b*) *susi*, a kind of cotton cloth; and (*c*) *sarees* or veils made by the Jat women.

(*a*) Lois or Blankets.—These are a species of serge, and are made in the city and districts. The price varies from Rs. 3 to Rs. 25 per piece of 8 yards by 1½ yards, or the *than*. The Bikanir sheep has fine long wool, as it is nourished by many excellent grasses which grow well on the sand. The Bikanir *lois* have a great reputation throughout Rajputana.

(*b*) Susi.—This is a narrow cotton fabric distinguished by having stripes lengthwise down the piece of a different colour from the groundwork. The common patterns are dark blue with white stripes, or blue with red stripes. Seven illustrations (No. 14, figs. 5 to 11) will be found in the writer's monograph on the manufactures of Ajmere, No. 26, *Journal of Indian Art*, April, 1889.

(*c*) Sarees.—In the centre and north of the State the Jat women make embroidered *sarees* or veils, which are worn on festive occasions, and are certainly of high artistic excellence. Of somewhat similar *ohrnas* or *chadars*, as they are also called, which are made in the Hissar District of the Punjab on the Bikanir border, Mr. Kipling, in the twentieth number of this *Journal*, writes as follows:—"The embroidered *ohrnas* or *chadars* of the district are worthy of mention, for though nothing could be more homely than the material, or more simple than the design, they are thoroughly good and characteristic in effect."

The whole manufacture is local. The spinning, dyeing, and working are all done by the women, and each *saree* takes from four to six months to make, as it is only taken in hand in spare moments and there is an immense deal of elaborate stitching to get through. For most of the veils two pieces of country coarse cloth which has been dyed with madder are taken and united by open lattice-work stitches. At the ends and outsides a few narrow stripes are generally left of a lighter colour and the border is fringed. Narrow strips of embroidered blue cloth are sometimes sewn on to the central two-thirds of the garment. These form ornamental folds when the *saree* is in use.

The sewing is done with different coloured wools and cotton thread. The tints are usually white, a golden yellow, brown, blue, and here and there a little red and sage green, and all harmonize to perfection. Sometimes small round pieces of coarse mirror glass are let in, generally without any regularity, to catch the light and give an additional glow to the garment in the bright sunlight. Such pieces of glass are introduced into the curious strips of embroidery which are used in the Eastern Jeypore district of Hindown to finish off the dyed *chadars* of the common people. In all these parts the Jats, the Gujars, Meeras, and early, generally perhaps pre-Rajput, occupants of the land produce quaint embroidery which has an old world air about it.

There are scarcely two Bikanir *sarees* which are quite like each other, yet—in all—the elements of the design are much the same, viz., modifications of crosses, squares, stars, and octagonal figures, with trees, birds and animals reduced to geometrical forms. There is an irregularity about the minor details, such as the distribution of the ornaments, the inequality in length of the two pieces of cloth or of the fringes, and the arrangement of the colours which is very attractive, and which shows that each garment has been the object of considerable thought; in short, that in every case mind has been put into it. The stitches are not very numerous. The regular arrangement and open character of the warp and woof lend themselves particularly to the cross, the *Phulkari* (a kind of darning stitch, the Point Russe, the button hole and herring-bone stitches. The stem and chain stitch are not uncommon. In all the stitches there is a very economical use of wool or thread, as is well seen from an examination of the back of the *saree*. There is no waste. *Sarees* are most frequently made, but bodices and petticoats are also embroidered in the same fashion. The following notes on a few specimens will give some idea of the nature of the work:—

An embroidery *Saree*. Length, 6ft. 4in.; width, 3ft. 5in. It is formed out of two long strips of red cloth, having a few narrow stripes on the outer sides and ends of each. The inner free edges are fastened together by means of coarse open or lattice stitches, and where two or three holes have been accidentally made in the stuff they are roughly closed by darning stitches. The top and bottom are filled up with six sampler tree-like forms in stem and darning stitch. Along the sides runs a sort of vandyked pattern in yellow and white wool. Across the centre is a band ten inches wide which is formed of two diagonal crosses placed upon two lozenges. The limbs of the cross are composed of white bars of cross stitch in thread flanked by broader lines done in brown wool. The intermediate spaces are filled up with squares and diamonds, to some of which two triangles are attached at each angle of the figure. On either side of the band there are two conventional peacocks done in cross stitch. Most of the other ornaments are worked in darning and Point Russe stitch. Above and below the band there are two pairs of what might be termed Calvary crosses arranged side by side and base to base. The two outer arms of the crosses terminate in diamonds which have two small triangles at each corner. At the inner

angles of the crosses the triangles and diamonds are somewhat different. There are bands of herring-bone stitches at the top and bottom of the *sari*.

Leather Water Bags or Chagals (No. 4).—These are made at Reni, one of the smaller towns of Bikanir. They are used by travellers, and their contents are kept cool and sweet for a long time. They are generally ornamented with coarse embroidery in silk or cotton. The stopper is a plug of wood, and the spout is usually made of silver. These chagals are sold all over the west country.

Painting, Literature.—Under these heads Bikanir produces little of importance. Portraits similar to those painted in Jeypore are done in the bazar, but are of no great value. There are a few pictures in the Palace, and some valuable books have been collected. The most interesting work is, perhaps, a copy of the famous Oriental book on the love story of Leila and Majnun. It is about 250 years old and is written in Persian. The illustrations, which are done in the Persian manner, are very good. The first words of the chapters are very charming specimens of illuminated medallions, and it has been suggested that they would serve as beautiful patterns for enamel brooches.

History of Bikanir and General Notes on the Country.—It is unnecessary to do more than give a very brief account of the history of the country. Bika, sixth son of Jodha Rao, who founded the city of Jodhpore and ruled Marwar, subdued the country now known after his name as Bikanir. Most of the land was then owned by Jat clans, but some of it was ruled by Bhatis of the same tribe which is now in possession of Jaisalmer. Bika died in 1505, having founded his capital of Bikanir in 1488. One of his descendants, Rai Singh, was brother-in-law of the Emperor Akbar, and for a century, at least, a firm connection with Delhi enabled the princes of Bikanir to preserve and even increase their dominions. In 1818 an alliance was made with the British Government, and since that date nothing of any great importance has occurred. The nobles have, however, always been turbulent, though at times the oppression of their rulers has been some excuse for their misconduct.

At one time the transit trade of Bikanir was considerable, as it was on the through route from Kabul to India. This direct communication with Central Asia may have had some effect in introducing artistic ideas into the desert land. Kabul fruit, furs, horses, carpets, woollen cloths, grain, &c., still come by this route either for use in Bikanir or in transit towards Marwar. Wool, *multani-matti* or fuller's earth, and sugar candy, besides *ghi* and grain, are exported. The sugar candy is especially famous throughout Rajputana. The sugar is brought from the North-West Provinces and is clarified in Bikanir. It is much valued for presents to great personages.

Major Talbot, C.I.E., Political Agent in Bikanir, has kindly read over most of this paper, and to him I am indebted for a very large portion of the information contained in it. I have also to express my thanks to the Bikanir Durbar for much valuable assistance.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Industrial Art in Bikanir. 19 full-page Plates.

The East India Company.—Eliza Draper's Letter, 4 pages.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE RECORDS AND RELICS OF THE LATE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

By SIR GEO. C. M. BIRDWOOD, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., M.D., LL.D.

[*Continued from the "Journal of Indian Art" for July, 1890*].

A Letter from Mrs. Daniel Draper, dated Tellicherry, April, 1769.

This letter, from Sterne's "Eliza," reproduced by Mr. William Griggs for the January number of the *Journal of Indian Art*, has been lent for the purpose by Col. Francis Grant, formerly of the 5th Lancers, who purchased it—for just 7/6 !—of Mr. Edward Daniell, the well-known book-seller of 53 Mortimer Street.

It is a document of considerable interest, for it not only affords a clue to the identification of the parentage of Mrs. Daniel Draper, but illustrates, in a familiar manner, a critical time in the history of the British conquest of the Deccan, namely, the close of "the first war in Mysore."

Hyder Ali had made himself master of the ancient Hindu kingdom of Mysore in 1760–1; and in 1766 invaded Calicut, when the last of the Zamorins of that petty state burned himself in his palace to avoid capture. On this a confederacy against the usurper was formed by the Mahrattas and the Nizam of Hyderabad, into which the Madras Government were drawn, through their treaty with the Nizam. But Hyder Ali not only bought off both the Mahrattas and the Nizam, but induced the latter to join him against the English. Thus, without warning, Col. Joseph Smith, who commanded the contingent supplied by the Madras Government, suddenly found himself with only 7,000 men and 16 guns, opposed by an overwhelming native force of 70,000 men and 100 guns. He, however, routed them with a terrible slaughter and took 60 of their guns. The Nizam at once sued for peace, which was signed in 1768. The terms of it stipulated that the English should occupy a portion of the Carnatic Balaghat [literally "Above-Ghat," *i.e.*, the table-land of Mysore], and accordingly, while Col. Smith entered the Baramahal ["Twelve Forts"] of Mysore [now the Salem District of the Madras Presidency] an auxiliary force, far too small for the purpose, was sent from Bombay to Tellicherry to invade the Mysorean plateau from the west. The Bombay Expedition was at first very fortunate, destroying Hyder Ali's fleet and capturing Mangalore and Honore. But on the advance of his army, they had hastily to abandon these places, leaving their sick and wounded behind them. Col. Smith, however, had been most successful in the Baramahal, and in spite of Hyder Ali's reconquest of the Malabar Coast, up to the walls of Tellicherry, he was glad to sue for peace. This the Madras Government foolishly refused; and, at the same time, still more foolishly superseded Col. Smith. His successor in six weeks lost all that had previously been gained; when the Madras Government hurriedly replaced Col. Smith in his command. But it was too late. Hyder Ali, by forced marches, unexpectedly appeared before Fort St. George, and there, on the basis of an alliance against the Mahrattas, dictated to the vacillating Government of Madras the terms of a humiliating peace, in April, 1769. Harry Verelst was then Governour of Bengal, 1767–9; Charles Bourchier of Madras, 1767–70; and Thomas Hodges of Bombay, 1767–71.

Such are the surrounding circumstances of Mrs. Draper's letter, which is dated from "Tellicherry, April, 1769."

Tellicherry, on account of facilities its port afforded as a centre of the pepper and cardamom trade of Malabar, had been the seat of one of the Company's Factories from 1683. The Factory was reduced in 1766 to a Residency; but the place again became of the first importance to the Company during the wars with Hyder Ali and his son Tippu-Sahib, as the basis of operations against the Carnatic from the Malabar Coast. "Mount Dilly," mentioned in the letter, in Portuguese Monte d'Eli, is the Malabari *Eli-Mala*, *i.e.*, "High Mountain," famous in mediæval times as a prominent land mark to ships approaching India from the west.

The *Grenville*, by which the present letter was sent home, was an "East India-man" of 499 tons, commanded by Capt. Burnet Abercromby, and the India Office Records shew that she arrived in the Downs, on her second return voyage from "Madras and Bombay," on the 3rd of November, 1769. The letter is endorsed as having been received by the person to whom it was addressed, the 5th idem. Who that person was does not appear. He was interested in some one of the baptismal name of Stephen; and may possibly have been Mr. Daniel Draper's great friend, Commodore James of the Indian Marine, who was on the Bombay station from 1747 to 1759; when he returned to England, enriched with the booty of Severndroog, and became Chairman of the East India Company, Governour of Greenwich Hospital, an M.P., and a baronet. He died in 1782. Mrs. James was Miss Goddard, daughter and co-heiress of Edward Goddard, of St. Anne's, Westminster.

Mrs. Daniel Draper was born at Anjengo in 1743, and Col. Welsh in his *Military Reminiscences*, published in 1830, records how, when visiting the place, he carried off, as a memorial of her, two or three pieces of oyster shell, or "mother of pearl," from the broken windows of her house there. I quote this from Mr. James Douglas's delightful book, *Round about Bombay*, in which he condenses in a short chapter all the hitherto known facts of this fascinating lady's romantic career. It has always hitherto been said that her parentage was unknown; but her mention in the letter of "Tom Whitehill, my kind uncle," affords a clue to it, which I must leave others, having more leisure than myself, to work out. A little lower down she names "Jack Whitehill . . . at Madras"; and he can be none other than John Whitehill, who was acting Governor of Madras in 1777–78, and again in 1780, when, on account of the incompetency he shewed in his dealings with the Nizam and Hyder Ali, he was peremptorily dismissed by Warren Hastings.

Mr. Daniel Draper, who entered the Company's service in 1749, and was at Gambroon in 1751, married "Eliza" in 1761, and went with her to England in 1762. He returned to India alone in 1765, she following him in 1767, in the East India Company's ship the *Earl of Chatham*, which I find from the India Office Records sailed from the Downs 3rd April, 1767, and was lost on her return voyage to England, 13th October, 1768. This was the period of her correspondence with Sterne, with whom she became acquainted at the house of the James's in London. Mr. James Douglas says that the Drapers lived continuously in Bombay, at Belvedere or Mazagon House, from 1768 to 1772. But the present letter proves that they were both at Tellicherry in 1769, and "Eliza's Tree," which was to be seen at Masulipatam, until it was unfortunately washed away by the cyclone of 1864, seems to indicate that at some time the Drapers must have been stationed on the Coromandel Coast. In 1772 Eliza eloped out of one of the upper windows of Belvedere, with Sir John Clark of the Royal Navy; and in 1778 died, aged 35, at Bristol, where a monument in the Cathedral commemorates her "genius and benevolence;" but not the bewitching little woman's pitiful "folly." Mr. Draper himself returned permanently to Europe in 1782.

Mrs. Draper's attack on Governour Hodges is fully justified by his half-hearted support of the expedition sent from Bombay to Tellicherry; and her references to his Hindu astrologer are deeply interesting. Mr. James Douglas has much to say about the man. He had many years before said that Hodges would be Governour of Bombay. He also prophesied that the night of the 22nd of February, 1771 would be dangerous to his master; and the next morning Hodges was found sitting up in his bed, with his forefinger on his lips, as if enjoining silence, stark dead.

Col. Pemble, the husband of the "Louisa" of the letter, was James Pemble, who as a Major commanded under Monro at the battle of Buxar, 23rd October, 1764; and was subsequently transferred to the Bombay Residency. He became a Lt.-Col. in 1767, and commanded the Bombay troops in Malabar in 1769. Of the civilian, Mr. Banister, I have found no trace; but Mr. Griggs has left me little time to do so.

The epistolary use by Mrs. Draper of the name "Mount Dilly," so late as 1769, is a little remarkable. "Cooly boats," "Malawans," "Madrasers," and "gloriously hated," are epithets and phrasings new to me. "Phesendars," *i.e.* "Fazendars," were originally the collectors, or rather farmers, of the King's taxes under the Portuguese. They resembled the Zamindars under the Mahomedan administration. Later the term came to mean "superior landlord," but now it is applied, as a high-sounding compliment, to any cultivator of Portuguese extraction; just as among the Hindus and Mahomedans the term *zamindar* is now used of the pettiest landowners.

In conclusion, I may add that under Col. Smith served the Col. Donald Campbell whom Eliza Draper desired to marry to Sterne's daughter Lydia. This letter indeed strikes the key-note of a capital historical novel on the English in India in the eighteenth century.

W Griggs, Collotyper, Peckham, S. E.

1.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE FORT AND CITY OF BIKANIR.

Photographed by Mr. Shew Shunkar, Bombay.

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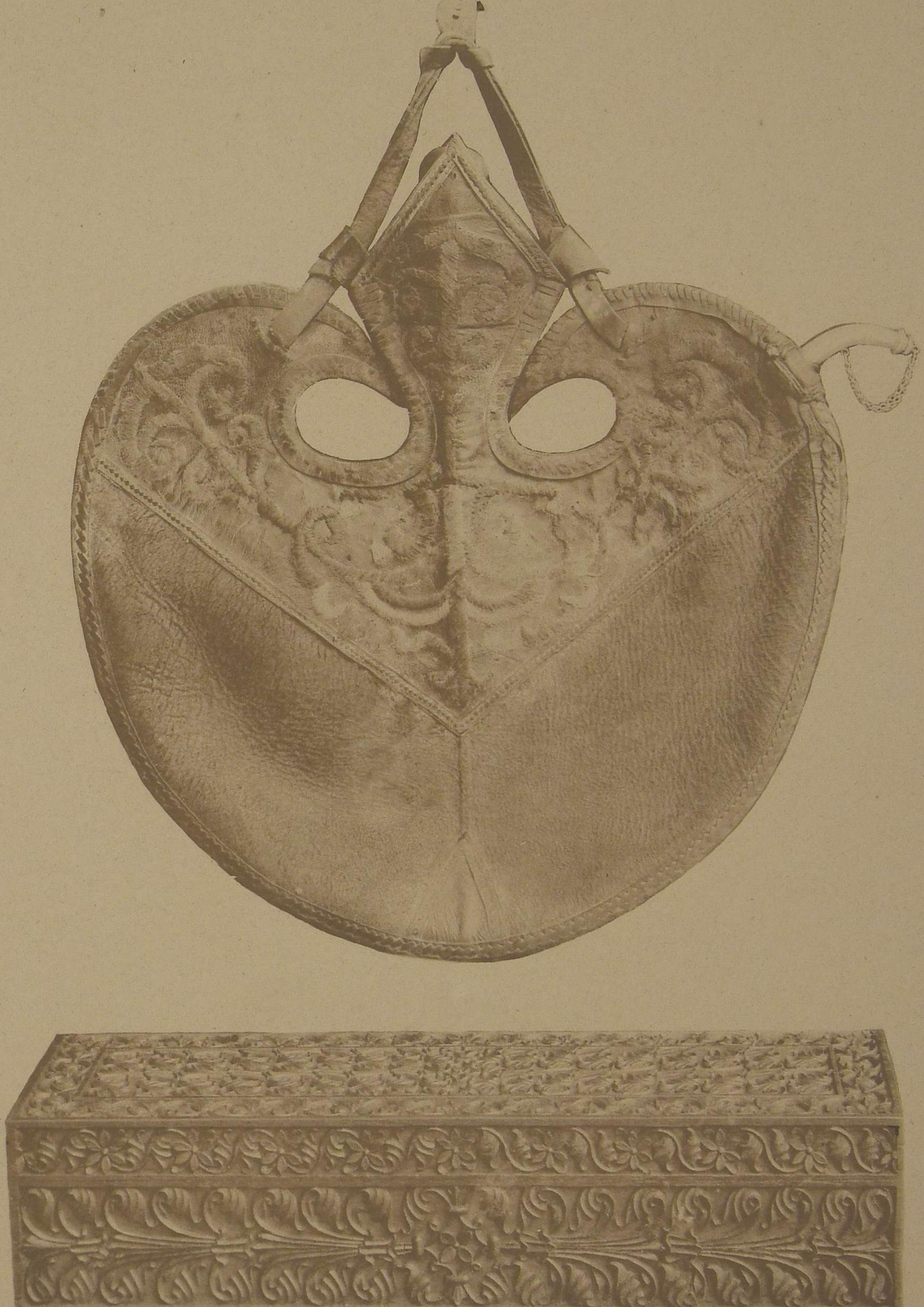
2.—A MERCHANT'S HOUSE IN RED STONE. BIKANIR.

Photographed by Mr. Shew Shunkar, Bombay.

W. Griggs, Collotyper, Peckham, S. E.

3.—A Merchant's House in Red Stone. Bikanir.

Photographed by Mr. Shew Shunkar, Bombay.



W Griggs, Collotyper, Peckham, S. E.

4.—Carved Wooden Box and Leather Water Bag. Bikanir.

5.—Bracelets and Silver-Water Tumbler. Bikanir.

6.—Painted and Lacquered Table from Bikanir.

a

b

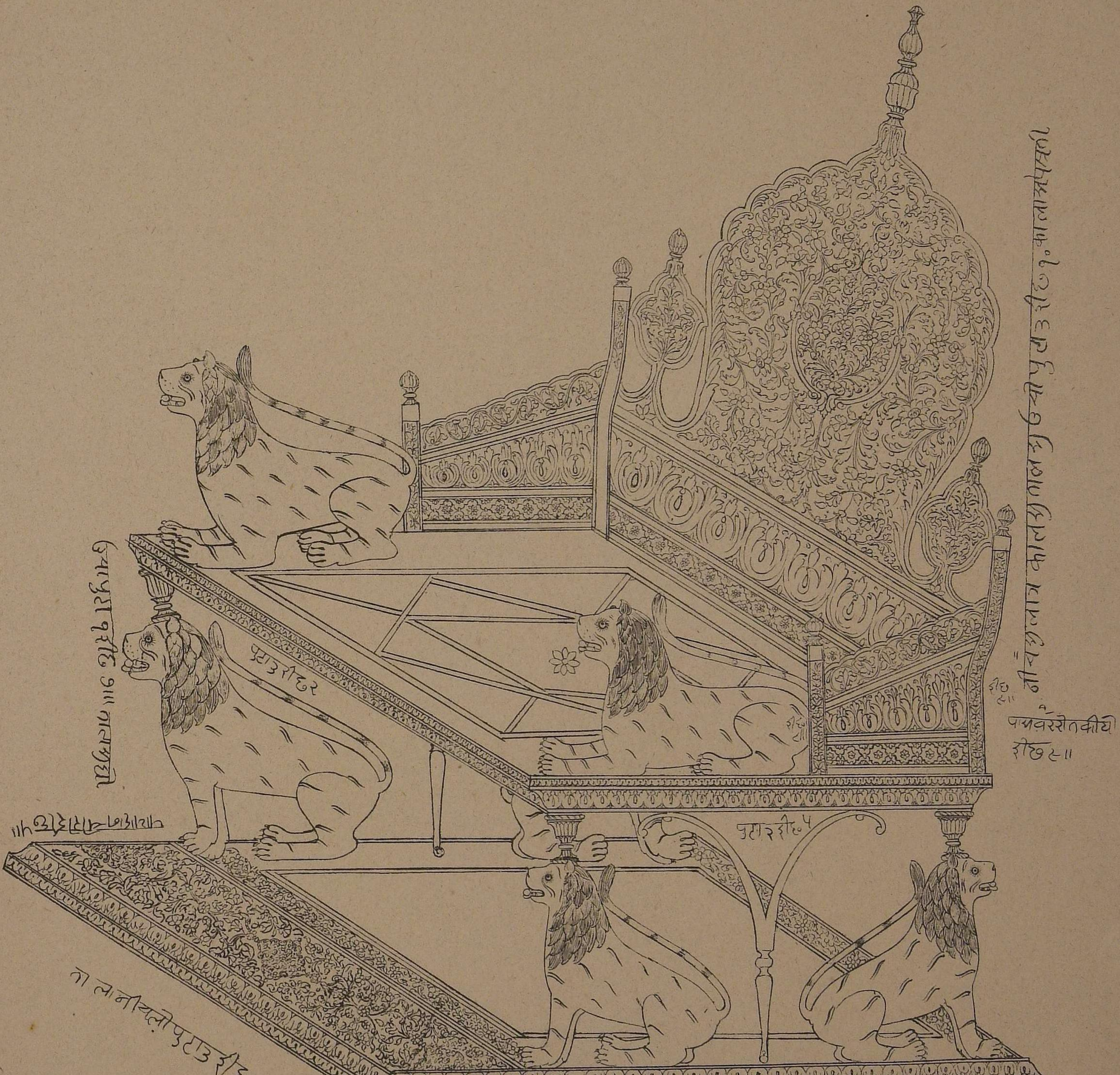
7.—(a) Lacquered Water Pot, Rs. 6/12. (b) A Jar, Rs. 5/8.
Bikanir. Full size.

8.—(*a*) Lacquered Vase, Re. 1/6. (*b*) Oil Flask, Re. 1/12. (*c*) Vase, Re. 1/9.

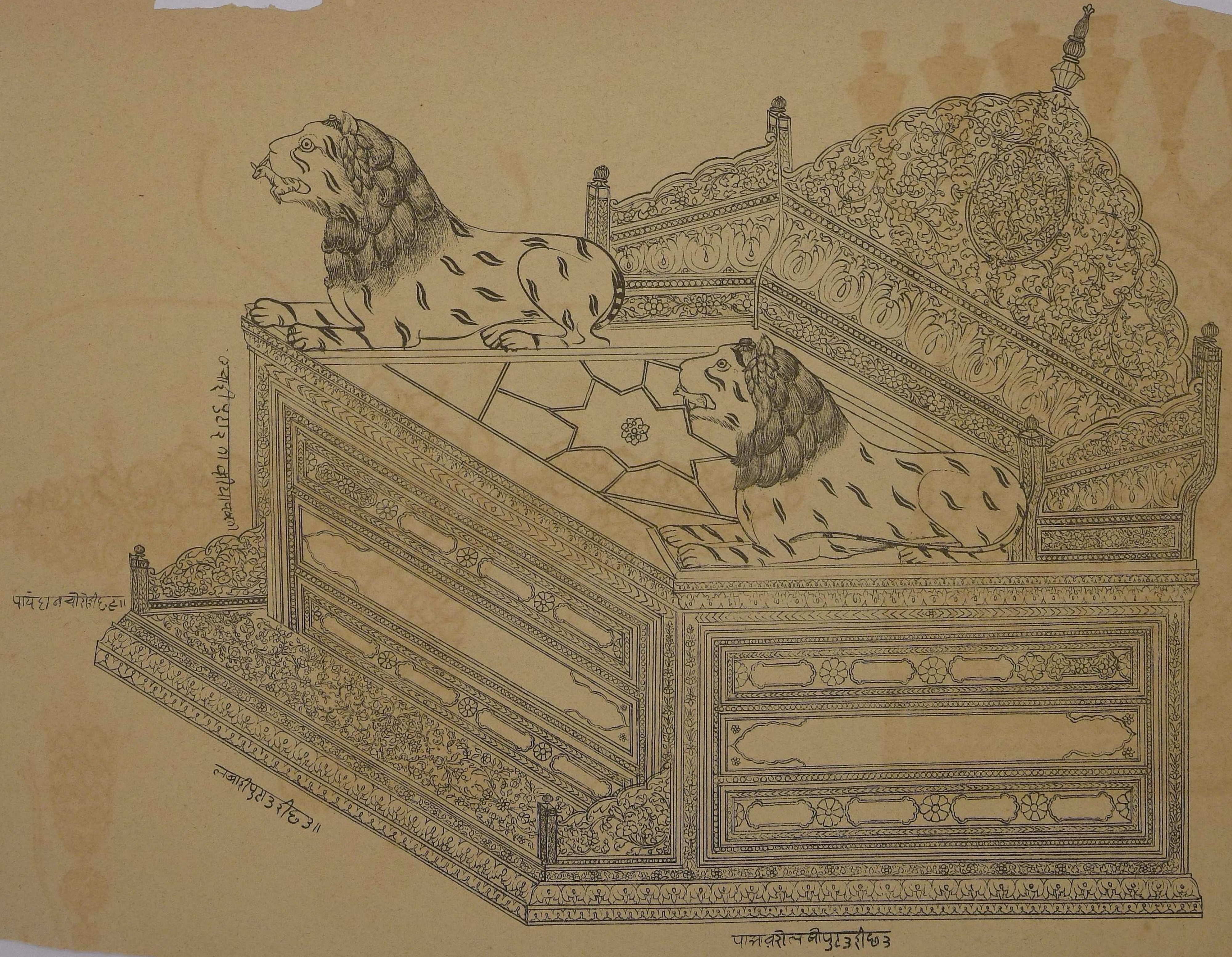
Bikanir. Full siz…

9.—(*a*) LACQUERED JAR, Rs. 4. (*b*) VASE, Rs. 2. (*c*) VASE, Rs. 2/8.

10.—(*a*) LACQUERED VASE, Re. 1/3. (*b*) VASE, Re. 1/6. (*c*) WATER BOTTLE, Rs. 2/1.
(*d*) WATER BOTTLE, Rs. 2/1. Bikanir. Full size.

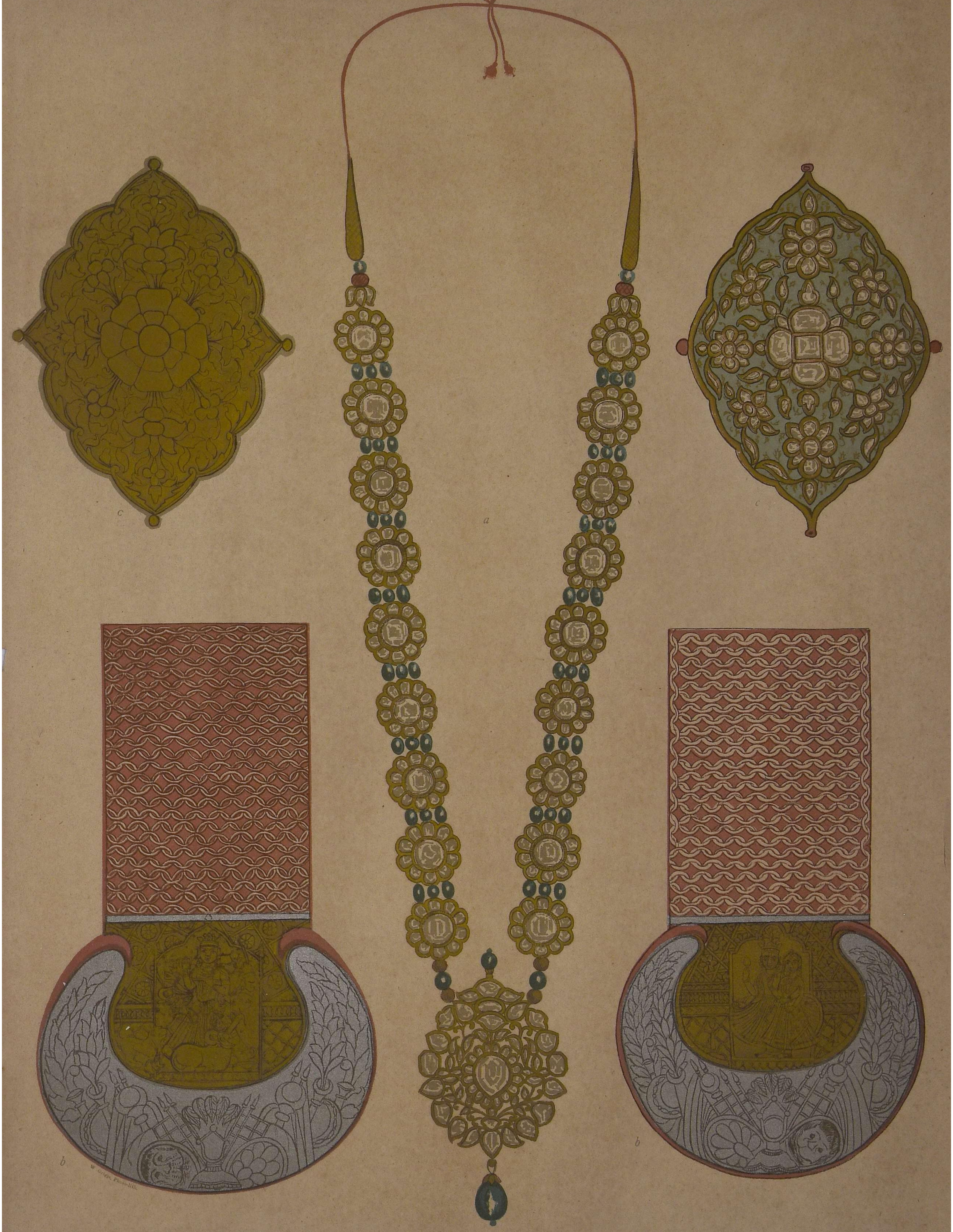


11 —SILVER THRONE. Bikanir.

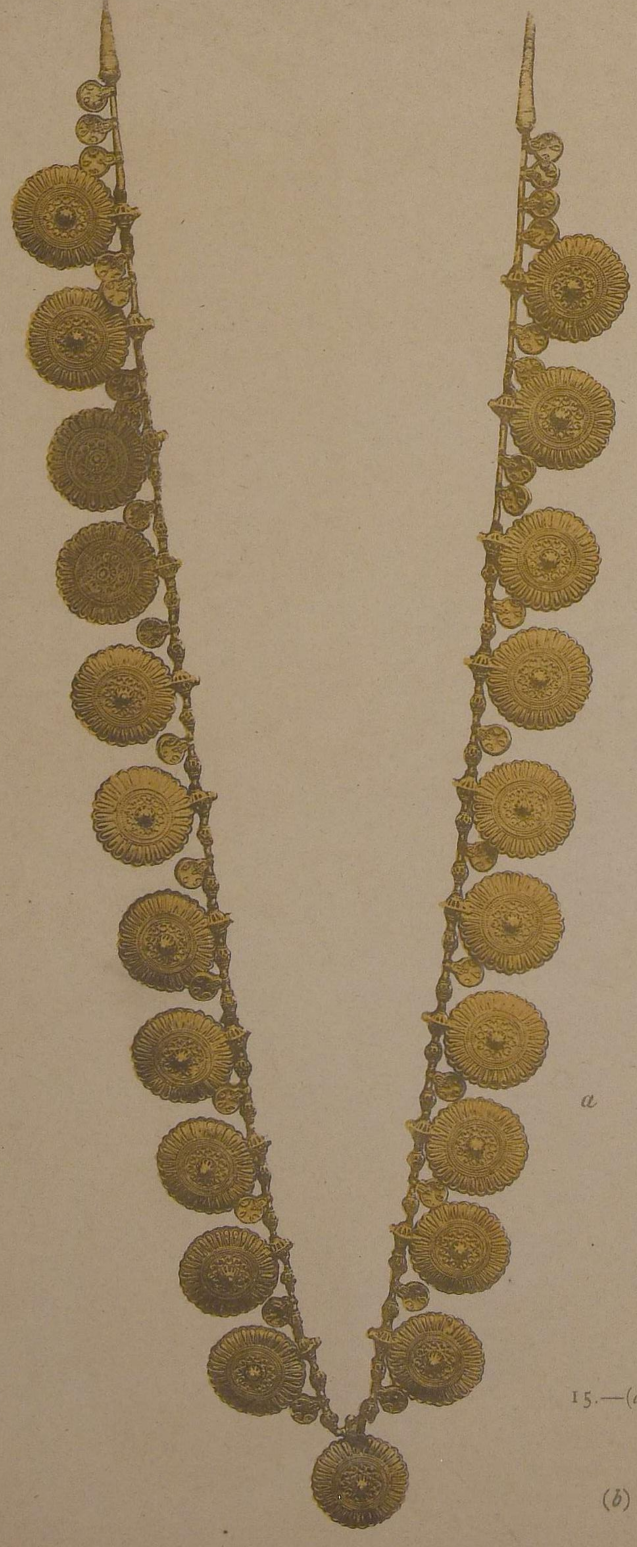


12.—SILVER THRONE. Bikanir.

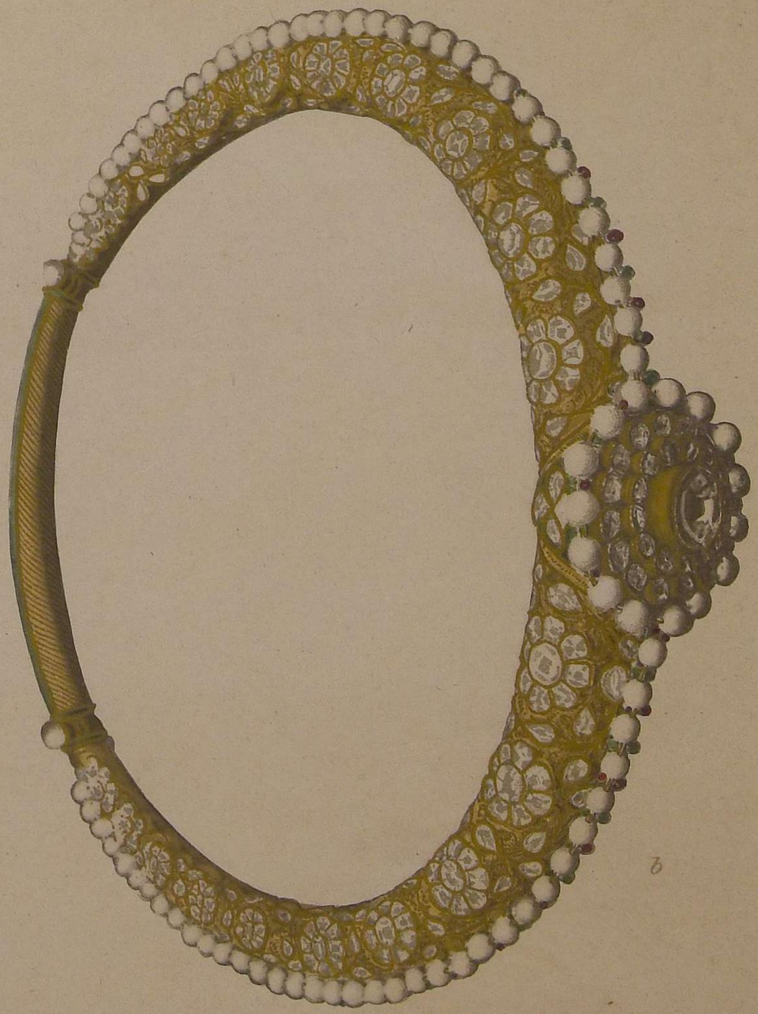
13.—(*a*) Diamond Sarpech. (*b*) Diamond Choga (head ornament inclining towards the neck).
(*c*) Pearl Sehra (head ornament used on marriage occasions by brides). Mad



14.—(*a*) Diamond Necklace. (*b* and *c*) Gold, Silver and Diamond Khags (shoulder ornaments). Bikanir.



a



b

15.—(*a*) HAIKAL, or neck ornament of gold discs. Worn in Bikanir and Marwar by women. Such neck ornaments are also placed round the necks of animals.
3ft. 9in. long. Weight $14\frac{1}{5}$ ounces. Value Rs. 750.

(*b*) FRONT VIEW OF A JEWELLED GOLD HAUSLI, or collar for the neck, worn by wealthy women in Bikanir and Marwar. Weight $14\frac{1}{2}$ ounces. Value Rs. 4000.

16.—HAUSLI, or collar of gold worn round the neck in Bikanir and Marwar by women.
Weight nearly $10\frac{3}{4}$ ounces. Value Rs. 375.

17.—Back View of a Jewelled Gold Hausli. Enamelled. Bikanir.

18.—(*a*) Lacquered Ink Pot. (*b*) Vase. (*c* & *d*) Water Bottle. Bikanir.

19.—(*a*) Lacquered Hookah Bowl. (*b*) Flower Vase. (*c*) Vase.
(*d*) Water Pot. Bikanir.

My Dear Sir

It's with great pleasure I take every oppor=
=tunity of paying my Duty to you, but more particularly this
by the Grenville, as by her I'm enabled to give you a better account
of Mr Drapers Success as a Merchant, than he flatter'd himself with
any hopes of, upon his arrival at Tellicherry, and if Fortune
continues to be as propitious to us, the six ensuing Seasons, as she's
proved the last, — Mr D— would not thank the Directors for nominat=
=ing him to the Government of Bombay. We are both well, entirely
contented and wish not to exchange our Situation, but for an
Independance in England, which I hope we are in the way of obtain
=ing, and may accomplish in six or seven Years, notwithstanding
Hyder Ally maintains his Ground, and has absolutely refused to
listen to terms of Peace from the Madrassers, unless they will make
over Trichinopoly to him. this, they think they can not in point of
Honor, or Conscience do — tho' they are heartily tired of the War, &
wish to accomodate with him, on reasonable terms — they are now
preparing for a long Siege, which he has threatened them with, and
if they do not receive Supplies of Money, & Troops, from England,

W. Griggs & Sons, Photo-lith.

A Letter from Eliza Draper, dated Tellicherry, April, 1769.

God knows! what will be their fate:- as Hyder is really a very clever, & enterprising Man,- accustomed to face, & Conquer Europeans and has for his Secret adviser, one of the best Politicians in India, Governour Laws- of Pondicherry. whom it is imagined, has always plan'd each of his Campaigns; the Gentlemen of Bengal have drained their Treasury to befriend those of Madrass- but the Governour of Bombay- will not consent to assist them in any respect. tho' he has often been sollicited to do it- and a little timely aide from our Side, might have prevented the present Melancholy prospect, but he says he has no Notion of Quixotism adventures, and as we cannot benefit by the troubles, he will not risque our suffering any loss- this argument is very cruel, & Superficial, tho' at first it may appear Specious, tis impolitic too, because if the Madrassers are worsted, we certainly shall be the next Prey- but that's a distant Day. & he always quotes "Sufficient to the Day is the "Evil thereof." but he is a poor, despicable Creature, in every respect and as unfit for a Governour- as I am for an Ach-Bishop, not one Individual, is there at Bombay, his friend,- and in short, he neit is- or deserves to be, loved, esteem'd, or feared. We are very particular=ly interested in Hyders Success, at this Settlement. as he has most of

the Country powers, about us, in total Subjection, & infests our Coast, with his Fleet; to intercept our Merchantmen, their's no leaving us, now for Bombay, with any Safety, without a Convoy. & the Bombay Cruizers, three or four of them, are Stationed between Carwar, Onore & Mount Dilly, for that purpose. we are terribly infested too, by the Cooley Boats, & Mallawans. the Morattas, had the Insolence to Surround Bombay with their Fleet a few Months since, which did not a little terrify our Pusillanimous General, but they soon dispersed when the Commodore received Permission to ask them some questions. its imagined this Bravado was effected at the Instigation of Hyder, to Divert us from all thoughts of sending Troops to Madrass, it answer'd his hopes—but if he had bribed the Governours Brahmin to be his friend, it would have done as well—for nothing in Public, or domestic Concerns, is transacted at Bombay, without that Fellows Kno ledge & consent some of the Gentlemen by way of reprimand, have advised Mr Hodges to give him a Seat at Council. our Island is now very Populous—very extensive, very improvable, & would be very flourishing, if we had a proper Man at the head of affairs.

This

This Coast has been vastly injured by Hyders Ravages. 'tis nothing in Comparison to what it was some Years ago. but would still be the source of profit to the Company, & a Tellicherry Chief if the War was once happily terminated. - Most of the Gentlemen that distinguished themselves, by behaving ill at Mangalore, have been broke by a General Court Martial at Bombay. it was a tedious affair - lasting upwards of six Weeks, tho' the Members met Daily, - This my dear Sir, is all the Public Intelligence, I can recollect, worthy of transmitting You. and now for a little private, Tom Whitehill, my kind Uncle, is well - I often hear from him & he must by all accounts, have made himself independant, by this time. he is increasing his Family of Natural Children, but declared to me, that he never would give them more than five thousand Rupees each, because he would not tempt any Gentleman to marry them for the sake of Money. and he had rather dispose of them to Phesendars of their own Colour - than to Europeans - he has one Daughter Marriageable, two Young ones, & two or three infant Sons. - I never hear from Jack Whitehill, but I know he is well, from my Correspondents at Madraps. I hope he does not maintain silence to his English friends, as

should he be a good Accomptant & write Swiftly Mr Draper
would be very glad of him here - make it worth his while, and
keep him out of harms way. as he is in want of just such a
Person, You know his inability to use the Pen - he has lost his
two Clerks too, & if I was not capable of assisting, & maintaining
his Correspondence for him I know not what he would do, at this
juncture. I only fulfil my Duty - and have not the least Merit in
it - as a good Purvoe that thoroughly understood English, and
spelled properly - would answer his Views still better. Louisa is
very advantageously Married, to the Commander of our Forces, a
Colonel Pemble, he is handsome, amiable and Magnificent in
his temper - his Income amounts to thirty thousand Rupees a
Year - but I fear they stand little chance of saving a Fortune, as
they are Gay - extravagant, & fond of Company. but I know not if
it signifies much - as they love India - are healthy, admired, and
esteemed here - and not very desirous of exchanging affluence in
the Eastern

fondness. and is a Prince in Spirit, and occasional good works, they are on no terms with the Governour, neither visiting, or being visited by him. A Mr Banister, that is much older than yourself & formerly knew you in the Service, now resides here — he desired me to present his kindest remembrances to you, assuring you of his unalterable esteem, & good wishes. The good Man & his Wife live very comfortably - are well, and much noticed with respectful attention I hope to be favor'd with long & interesting letters from Europe by the next Ship — England! which was always dear to me — was never so much so as now! - the Welfare of my dear Children, sits very near my heart, & I cannot help feeling great anxiety on their account, tho' I am confident of Mrs Whitehills care, and best attention to their true Interest, God preserve the poor babes! may they live to give satisfaction to their Parents - and reflect honour on their amiable Protectress! I hope you had an agreeable Summer in the Society of my friend and little

by presenting my Complim[ents] to to him, and best wishes for his health,
and enjoyment of England; we now wish him out Head again, would
to Heaven he had not left us a Prey to the foolish policy, and low Cunn[ing]
of an Hodges! the wish is entirely general. not a moist Eye or grave
Countenance will be visible on his Departure, unless it's his Female
Sycophanty Skirt airers, for a few Rupees, or mere form's sake. oh! he is
gloriously hated, and I prognosticate, ever will be so – even by the
Wife of his Bosom – if he is Dotard enough with his jealous propens[ities]
and Selfish particularities, to make a Second choice: but no: – his
avarice will prevent his marrying again, for a good Woman would loathe
his Wealth with such an Incumbrance as himself – and a bad one i[s]

happy—prays your ever grateful and ... id Child

Eliza Draper

Tellicherry
April 1769

PS
Mr Draper presents you his respectful
Compliments, with t... ierest afsurences
of his doing every this ... n his power for
Stephen, if you se... to Bombay.

receiv'd the 2d Nov.
1769 —

AN ARMY-SURGEON'S NOTE BOOK.

INTERESTING EXTRACTS.

Health without Physic.

PEOPLE frequently wonder how it is that by wearing Harness' Electropathic Best disease may be speedily and effectually exterminated from the system. The fact is that the majority of suffering men and women have, from their very childhood, been so accustomed to fly to nauseous drugs and quack medicines, in the hope of obtaining relief whenever they have felt unwell, that they are inclined to doubt the efficacy of so convenient and simple an appliance as this genuine Electric Belt. Let such people once take the trouble to inquire into the matter for themselves, and either call or write, and have its action fully explained to them, and they will no longer be sceptical.

The Medical Battery Company (Limited), are the sole proprietors and manufacturers of Harness' Electropathic Appliances, and all in search of health are cordially invited to call if possible at their Electropathic and Zander Institute, 52, Oxford Street, London, W., and personally inspect the originals or copies of the thousands of unsolicited testimonials they have received. We do not think that those who act on this advice will have any doubt afterwards regarding the positive healing influences of mild continuous currents of electricity, such as are imperceptibly generated by wearing one of

HARNESS' ELECTROPATHIC BELTS.

These curative appliances are light and comfortable in wear, and the practical as well as scientific evidence we have of their remarkable curative efficacy is absolutely indisputable.

The Company's consulting officers are only too anxious at all times to answer any questions on the subject, either personally or by correspondence, and we sincerely trust that their efforts to provide suffering humanity with perfect appliances as aids to health, and the most approved methods of electrical treatment, may be amply rewarded in the future as in the past, and that the thousands of pounds they spend annually in advertising may be the means of preventing the intrusions and fraudulent dealings of pirates and vendors of the most useless and bogus toy appliances, and bring Harness' genuine Electropathic Belts under the notice of every suffering man and woman in the kingdom. We may add that those ailments which have been cured already by Mr. Harness' Electropathic treatment, can be cured again in the same way, and the more obstinate the disease the more anxious the Company's officers are to prove the marked supremacy of Electricity over medicine, or any other form of treatment. Those of our readers who reside at a distance, or are otherwise unable to call and avail themselves of a free personal consultation, should preserve this notice, and write without delay for descriptive illustrated pamphlet and book of testimonials. The latter contains copies of hundreds of letters received from all parts of the country, and from all classes of society, whom they have either relieved or completely cured of various nervous, muscular, and organic affections, including the following:—

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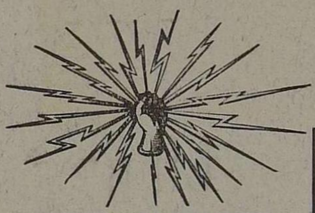

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